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# THE SHAW REVIEW

VOL. IV, No. 2

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# THE SHAW REVIEW

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# THE SHAW REVIEW

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May, 1961

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*Mere protest against inferior work never  
educates the public. The only way to make  
them intolerant of bad work is to shew  
them better.*

—G.B.S., in "The Opera Season" (*Scottish Art Review*, September, 1889),  
quoted in *How to Become a Musical Critic*.

# Shaw and the Passionate Mind

by Richard Farr Dietrich<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally, at least from the Greeks on, Western philosophers have made an important distinction between mind and heart, reason and passion, the man of intellect and the man of feeling. With its many variations, this distinction has caused no end of mischief in our political history and no end of nonsense in our literary criticism. And all this as if blood did not course through the brain as surely as through the heart. Occasionally, however, a man such as Bernard Shaw comes along to remind us that blood is the very life of the brain and that the mind is an organ of passion as surely as any other organ of our bodies. Shaw's reminder becomes especially apparent when we consider the ethic of the Shavian hero.

This ethic most Shaw critics have described as being "vitalist" and/or "pragmatist."<sup>2</sup> But vitalism and pragmatism are certainly not identical, and although there may be points of coincidence between them they are more traditionally seen as polar opposites. The paradox can be stated in somewhat the following terms. Pragmatism and vitalism are contemporary expressions for the rational method and the irrational method. Vitalism is an ethic of energy and pragmatism is an ethic of rational calculation and evaluation of this energy.<sup>3</sup> Pragmatism painstakingly searches consequences for signs of human profit before committing itself, vitalism irrationally commits itself to the release of the life energy; thus the commitment of the former is based on rational judgment, while the commitment of vitalism is really an act of faith. The antithesis seems to be apparent, and it is small wonder that Shaw has baffled so many critics, misleading some into considering him as an arch-rationalist, others into considering him as an arch-irrationalist, and forcing at least one, Eric Bentley, into considering him as a rational-irrationalist.<sup>4</sup> Bentley's suggestion is that some fusion has occurred in the Shavian ethic.

But some sort of clue is badly needed to explain this appearance of fusion, to help us escape from the obvious paradox of Shaw's seem-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dietrich derives this article from a Master's thesis published at Bowling Green State University. He is currently working on his Ph.D. at Florida State University. He would like to acknowledge his indebtedness to Professor Norbert F. O'Donnell, of B.G.S.U., who guided his understanding of Shaw.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Bentley, of course, serves as an example of those who see Shaw as a pragmatist and a vitalist. See his *The Playwright As Thinker* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958), p. 125. It is not so easy, however, to find a clear-cut example of a critic who sees Shaw only as a vitalist, although nearly everyone acknowledges Shaw's professed "New Vitalism." Most critics are puzzled by Shaw's practical, unRomantic, "rationalistic" side, and are either unable or unwilling to resolve and unify this with his vitalism. J. S. Collis is an example of a critic who notices fewer contradictions than most. See his *Shaw* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1924). Collins praises *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw's contribution to the Vitalist Bible, as a masterpiece, and claims that the last scene of his play attains "the highest point yet reached in English poetry." Collins also urges us to recognize the fact that "the proper study of mankind is not man, but Superman." And so goes the rest of the book, the general eulogistic tone broken only by a few disappointed words about Shaw's debunking of Progress.

<sup>3</sup> William James offers pragmatism as a mediator between Rationalism and empiricism, using Rationalism as a quality of intellectualism. *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959), p. 22. But, as used here, rationalism means only that the method of pragmatism is one of inductive reasoning, and totally non-intuitive.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Bentley, *Bernard Shaw* (New York: James Laughlin, New Directions Paperbook, 1957), p. xiv. In his introductory chapter, Bentley illustrates very well the critical confusion about Shaw, and goes on to propose his Both/And compromise.

ingly rational-irrational method. It may come as somewhat of a surprise, but that eminent conservative and Humanist, Irving Babbitt, provides us with just such a clue. Babbitt asserts that ". . . sub-rational intuition will be found to be associated with vital impulse (*élan vital*) and superrational intuition with a power of vital control (*frein vital*) over this impulse."<sup>5</sup> This dichotomy of vitalism is never made explicit by Shaw, since he includes both under the general term Life Force, but it is certainly implicit in everything he wrote. In the "Preface" to *Back to Methusaleh* Shaw simultaneously endorses Henri Bergson's *élan vital* and interprets Nietzsche's will to power as a will to self-control. Shaw claims that Nietzsche "had no difficulty in concluding that the final objective of the will was power over self, and that the seekers after power over others and material possessions were on a false scent."<sup>6</sup> Thus self-control (*frein vital*) is, for Shaw, "nothing but a highly developed vital sense, dominating and regulating the mere appetites," and, furthermore, being "the highest moral claim of Evolutionary Selection, it is the quality which distinguishes the fittest to survive" (II,22). Thus, while advocating self-control Shaw does not advocate rational self-control, as rational is traditionally understood.

It may be that, if Irving Babbitt is right, the Shavian paradox of rational-irrationalism does not exist at all, that it is rather a question of the subrational and the superrational, that Shaw's "pragmatism" is really the result of a superrational intuition of a completely original line of reasoning about consequences without any reference to any preconceived rational discipline. Thus the distinction between the "pragmatism" of James and Dewey on the one hand and Shaw on the other becomes clear. For James and especially Dewey, truth is the result of a careful, rational consideration of facts and particulars. But for Shaw, more often than not, truth is arrived at through an exceptionally unscientific process. The following quotation from Shaw, comparing the method of the Webbs to his own, should make the point clear.

As both he (Sidney Webb) and Beatrice conscientiously refrained from forming their conclusion until they had with inexhaustible industry investigated all the available evidence, they had furious disputes with me at almost every step. I am not a complete a priorist, because I always start from a single fact or incident which strikes me as significant. But one is enough. I never collect authorities nor investigate conditions. I just deduce what happened and why it happened from my flair for human nature, knowing that if necessary I can find plenty of documents and witnesses to bear me out in any possible conclusion. This is a shorter method than that of the Webbs.<sup>7</sup>

Before putting this to the test by examining a few plays, let us look at one more important distinction. Eric Bentley has helped Shaw criticism along considerably with his demonstration that Shaw is neither a rationalist nor an irrationalist, but that perhaps he is both. As Bentley qualifies it, the Both/And formula works well enough. However, perhaps it would be best to escape from this Both/And

<sup>5</sup> Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (New York: The Noonday Press, Meridian Books, 1947), p. 161. Apparently the term *frein vital* Babbitt derives from Pascal.

<sup>6</sup> *Selected Plays* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1948), II, lv. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Shaw's work are to this edition of four volumes.

<sup>7</sup> *The New York Times Book Review*, Nov. 18, 1945.

formula, not because it is incorrect (as qualified), but because Shaw's true position is to be found in the synthesis rather than in the thesis/antithesis, and is more simply expressed in the single concept of *frein vital* than in the double concept of rationalism/irrationalism. Too, the former needs only definition, while the latter constantly requires both definition and qualification. Taking a clue from Ibsen's *Emperor and Galilean* (a work much admired by Shaw), it would seem that Ibsen postulates and Shaw exemplifies a Third Empire which is not exactly a fusion of Emperor and Galilean but a separate and distinct realm of being to which both Emperor and Galilean succumb. Thus, to choose the ethical life is, for Shaw, to succumb to the famous moral passion which presented itself and clamored for choice in his sixteenth year. Also (to return to the *frein vital*) Shaw does not exemplify a simple fusion of the rational and the irrational (*Emperor and Galilean*); rather, in Shavian man, the rational and the irrational succumb to a higher quality of mind, that of the superrational intuition.

To illustrate these distinctions, let us look at three plays: *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *St. Joan*, and *The Apple Cart*. Caesar presents the most clear-cut example of the Shavian hero, Joan presents an example of the Shavian hero lacking an important ingredient, and Magnus presents an example of the plight of the Shavian hero in the unique circumstances of the Twentieth Century. The ethical method of these three heroes is similar enough, but there are important differences which reveal Shaw's attitude toward the ethical dilemma.

To begin with Caesar, we discover immediately that he is a man of *élan vital*. That is, Caesar by identifying himself with the mystery and riddle of the sphinx seems to indicate some sort of irrational commitment to the force of history, of which the sphinx is an immortal symbol. Caesar possesses in his nature the "gift of ruling" (III, 359), a gift which will perish without fruit unless he breaks the law of old Rome. Old Rome piously invokes the dead symbols of "law" and "duty" and "justice," unaware that Caesar embodies the living values behind these rational abstractions. But Caesar's "self" is thwarted and made miserable unless he can "selflessly" pursue the welfare of others, like Christ. And Caesar cannot break the old laws without first conquering the people who rigidly uphold them. In achieving this end, he tries various means. He is a great talker and a politician, and he seeks to exercise his gift with the assent of the world's will by explaining and justifying himself, or, failing in this, by buying fools with gold.

We are concerned then with Caesar's explanation of himself as his will collides with circumstances which are the result of a fixation of old values. Caesar knows that all real values are invested in living flesh, not in the mechanics of ancient offices and systems. But if Caesar's will were to blindly assault the condition of things, the result would be ruinous to both Caesar and the world. However, Caesar seeks neither ruin nor catastrophe (though sometimes they are forced upon him), and thus he subjects the blind eye of *élan vital* to the vision of *frein vital*. This quality of mind serves as a check (control — economy) upon the willfulness of Caesar's longing for the divine, his irrational commitment to the persistence of the Life Force. This quality of mind seems to allow three things: the ability to perceive reality as

it ought to be (making the most of its vitality); to perceive reality as it can be (due to the limitations of matter); and, thirdly, to perceive that the dominion of real consequences, is independent of human rationalization.

Now let us take a close look at what has been called Caesar's "pragmatism." Behind Caesar's leniency and fine speech is apparently what Rufio ill-humoredly calls "foxing." (III, 408) Caesar is much in the habit of letting his prisoners go, which enrages Rufio since he will have to fight them again. Caesar defends his action with words of considerable *élan*: "Might not the gods destroy the world if their only thought were to be at peace next year?" (III, 408) Seeing Rufio's angry reaction to this, Caesar adds slyly in his ear, "Besides, my friend; every Egyptian we imprison means imprisoning two Roman soldiers to guard him, eh?" (III, 408) Caesar, the vital economist, is not one to waste vitality unnecessarily, which is what he means when he says that he never takes an avoidable risk. (III, 424) And his judgment on this point seems to be quite intuitive. Caesar allows Theodotus to go to his burning library, since he will engage the Egyptian army in putting out the fire while Caesar seizes the lighthouse. Rufio, as usual, is angered at this clemency, but Caesar, after the fact, is "quite delighted at his own cleverness." (III, 410) Caesar alone is able to divine the consequences of allowing freedom to Theodotus, and to see that there was profit in doing so. Anything but an original perception of consequences would not have produced the same happy results. And so Caesar deals with all his situations, not with the ponderous deliberation of an IBM, but with the instantaneous perception of reality which flashes upon him as though it were a holy vision.

Especially revelatory is Caesar's attitude toward the three murderers of the play. The murder of Pompey by Lucius Septimius shames him and he declares that if he could stoop to vengeance he would repay Septimius for such a deed with his own blood. Then Septimius reminds Caesar of his bloody campaigns in Gaul and the slaying of Vercingetorix, implying that this was an act of vengeance. But Caesar wishes is had been vengeance rather than the folly of political necessity which dictated the murder of Vercingetorix. He admits that in those younger days he had been a fool, implying that the quality of mind (*frein vital*) was not automatic with Caesar and perhaps had to struggle for domination. The reactions to murder of the mature Caesar, who fully possesses *frein vital*, are quite different. His ethical decisions are made on the basis of vital profit, not political necessity (which is sometimes called "pragmatism"). In the murder of Pothinus, he alone can grasp the vision of blood begetting blood and can see the futility of vengeance, with its senseless waste of human vitality. But the slaying of Ftataeteeta he heartily endorses, for it is like the slaying of an attacking beast. It is done without punishment, without revenge, without judgment; and Caesar is quite willing to take the responsibility for it, for, as he says, "this was natural slaying: I feel no horror at it." (III, 468) The vision of *frein vital* sees only human profit in the elimination of the bestial Ftataeteeta. The killing of a Ftataeteeta for precisely the same reason that thousands of snakes, rodents and flies are exterminated yearly is uniquely Caesarian, for Caesar holds all life to be equal. No rational system of ethics, however, could justify

this murder. Is it safe to say that William James would not justify it either?

If there are any more doubts about the nature of Caesar, Shaw quickly removes them in the "Notes" to the play. Caesar is much more than "a prodigy of vitality without any special quality of mind." (III, 478) Rather he possesses originality, which enables him to "estimate the value of truth, money, or success in any particular instance quite independently of convention and moral generalization." (III, 479) Furthermore, "in order to produce the impression of complete disinterestedness and magnanimity, he has only to act with entire selfishness; and this is perhaps the only sense in which a man can be said to be naturally great." (III, 479) Caesar, "having virtue, has no need of goodness." (III, 479) Having *frein vital*, he has no need of a rational morality.

So much for Caesar; let us now look at Saint Joan. It is significant that in the "Notes" to *Caesar and Cleopatra* Shaw refers to Joan as a half-wit genius, (III, 478) for it is certainly an omen of things to come. Shaw has shown Caesar to be greater off the battlefield than on it, but Joan is shown to be quite out of her depth when not leading the French to military glory.

Joan's method of ethical decision appears to be much like Caesar's. There is the same irrational commitment to the subrational force which she calls the "Will of God," whose intentions she perceives through her "voices." This commitment supersedes everything else, especially the commands of the Church Militant. It involves the fulfillment of her will, since she assumes that her will is the will of God, even at the risk of damnation.

Too, Joan seems to possess a certain *frein vital*. In the "Preface" Shaw says that "Everything she did was thoroughly calculated; and though the process was so rapid that she was hardly conscious of it, and ascribed it all to her voices, she was a woman of policy and not of blind impulse." (II, 283) Whether you call it "unconscious calculation" or superrational intuition, it amounts to the same thing. It means that Joan possessed at least some degree of vital control over her *élan vital*. But if Joan was "a woman of policy and not of blind impulse," Shaw surely means only in military matters, for in other matters she was ignorant as well as innocent, much unlike Caesar.

This ignorance is amply illustrated by her use of the word "commonsense." Now Shaw always maintained that there must be a common experience and common aspiration, upon which men can act without stopping to reason about them (I, 847); but there's a rub to all this, as is quite evident in tracing the use of the word "common-sense" through the play. Nearly everyone uses it to justify his own position, and Joan most of all. That is, there is only a common body of assumptions, but there are at least five such sets of belief at work in the play. Cauchon and the Inquisitor share one body of "common-sense," that affixed to the Catholic Church; the English Chaplain shares the "commonsense" of Protestantism and Nationalism with the French Joan, thus their conflict; Warwick possesses the "common-sense" of the feudal aristocracy and with it the doctrine of "political

necessity;" King Charles possesses the "commonsense" of the monarchic attitude; and finally there is the "commonsense," quite unique, of the inspired Joan.

Joan's obstinate pursual of *her* commitment finds her crossing too many lines of contrary discipline, although there is a point in each line with which her line of thought coincides. For instance, the English Chaplain, her fiercest opponent, is quite pleased with her Protestant Nationalism, and would have no quarrel with her were she English. In fact, she pleases nearly everybody at one point or another, a situation which certainly would not have escaped Caesar. Caesar would have walked out of the Inquisition with at least the Chaplain and Cauchon at each other's throats, and probably Warwick at Charles'. Even more likely, Caesar would not have gotten into such a corner in the first place. Joan, however, could not see the philosophical discrepancies among the views of her antagonists and the real consequences of their workings against her own position. It is not Joan's lack of prudence which brings about her fall, but her disregard of the real consequences of placing herself in direct opposition to the various rationalized disciplines which are persecuting her. These disciplines are disharmonious, because artificially fixed at different points in time and space, and ought not to be allowed to triumph over the vital reality of which they are caricatures. But if Joan does possess a measure of *frein vital*, her ignorance of the fixations of her adversaries simply prevents it from working. Her great error was to allow these men to sink their differences in their common antagonism toward her. At the burning of Joan the Inquisitor remarks that she is ". . . quite innocent. What does she know of the Church and the Law? She did not understand a word we were saying. It is the ignorant who suffer." (II, 409)

Shaw has said that "the burning of Joan of Arc was a horror, and that a historian who would defend it would defend anything." (II, 295) But Shaw thoroughly understood the value of martyrdom. The English Chaplain is redeemed and saved because he is able to witness the nature of cruelty, rather than just read about it in the Bible. To Cauchon's question, "Must then a Christ perish in torment in every age to save those who have no imagination?" (II, 423) Joan replies that if she has thus saved a man from further cruelty then she has not "burnt for nothing." (II, 424) But this is not Shaw's conclusion. Martyrdom is a waste of vitality and a triumph of illusion over reality, since it produces a sort of hypnosis upon its witness. Men develop fixations upon the cross, the act of martyrdom itself, while doing their best to ignore the implications of the martyr's ethical conquest. As Joan remarks, "It is the memory and the salvation that sanctify the cross, not the cross that sanctifies the memory and the salvation. . . I shall outlast that cross." (II, 418) Thus while Shaw was hardly a prudent man — among other things, *Commonsense about the War* nearly got him lynched — he nevertheless saw quite clearly the futility of martyrdom, and the value of Joan going far beyond the mere burning of her body.

Now let us turn to King Magnus and *The Apple Cart*. Magnus, too, is a man of *élan vital*, although he voices his commitment less exuberantly than Joan or Caesar. He tells Boanerges that the old india-

rubber stamp theory of constitutional monarchy will not work because it denies the divine spark which every man, even the worst monarch, possesses, signifying that every man is an attempt at a god. And, in reply to the request that he sign the ultimatum which will strip him of all his powers, Magnus warily says, "I have forces within me which your constitutional limits cannot hold in check." (IV, 304) Further, Magnus declares that he stands "for the evolutionary appetite against the day's gluttony." (IV, 271) So it is obvious that there is present here a commitment, a submission to a will larger than his own.

Now let us look at the method of Magnus to determine how the man of vitality operates in a modern, political situation. Once again, as in *Saint Joan*, the Shavian hero faces a number of adversaries who are quite thoroughly disunited. Living in separate rationalized worlds as they do, they are much given to squabbling. And Proteus realizes that Magnus is "as artful as the very devil. He'll have a pin to stick into the seat of every man of you . . . one man that has a mind and knows it can always beat ten men who haven't and don't." (IV, 248) Thus Magnus takes full advantage of his ability to discern the real consequences of the rationalized fixations of allegiances of these men and to see the real contradictions between them.

Magnus is quite the strategist. When, after much struggle, he admits that he rules by flattering his ministers, he is much congratulated for his sportsmanship and is even favored with a rendition by Boanerges of *Auld Lang Syne*. But Proteus remarks:

You are at present engaged in a tug of war with the King: the tug of your lives. You think you have won. You haven't. All that has happened is that the King has let go the rope. You are sprawling on your backs; and he is laughing at you. (IV, 261)

Of course there is method in all this merriment, for the King hopes that by stalling the issue he can prevent the cabinet from destroying its own position. As Magnus says, "Your danger is, not that I may defeat you, but that your success is certain if you insist." (IV, 272) If the King is reduced to a mere puppet of the cabinet, then the cabinet will not only be responsible for him, but also they will no longer be able to use him as a scapegoat for their mistakes. Furthermore, the King, because of his unique social position, can offend people and do things which the cabinet would never dare to do. Without the King's intercession the cabinet would be utterly at the mercy of the mob. These are the real consequences, Magnus perceives, of signing the ultimatum; but the cabinet cannot see beyond the artificially logical consequences of their own rationalized predispositions. They are united only in their anti-monarchic attitude, which they persist in only because they are committed to the emotional connotations of the word "democracy." Boanerges, for instance, though he rather likes the idea of a Strong Man, won't hear of democracy being called a humbug. (IV, 266) The egalitarian logic demands that the monarchy must go, since it is "undemocratic," and there is no question of vital profit. But Magnus, the man of *frein vital*, rescues them by threatening to abdicate and run for office in a democratic election. Then he could speak frankly about the members of the cabinet and discuss their merits in public. Proteus, always the political "pragmatist," quietly

admits that his ace has been trumped and hastily tears up the ultimatum. Thus, in the modern egalitarian world, today's Caesar struggles not against patricians like Pompey but against men of the mob like Boanarges. Magnus does not conquer, as does Caesar, "with enchanted sword, superequine horse and magical invulnerability" (III, 479); rather he just manages to hang on and make the most of a bad situation, even though his ethical powers be equal and identical to those of Caesar.

Summing up, then, we have discovered that the ethic of the Shavian hero is of largely intuitive nature. All men more or less of *élan vital*, the raw stuff of life, and this energy is controlled (civilized — socialized — economized) by the ethical insight, the quality of mind, *frein vital*, which Shaw speaks of as a moral passion. The hero is a hero not only because he possesses the quality of *frein vital*, but also because he possesses twenty times the *élan vital* of the ordinary man. He does not check or control his passions by any rational process; rather his passions are simply overwhelmed by a greater passion, the passion of virtue, which is a passion of the mind. It must be remembered that for Shaw thought is a passion. In *Back to Methuselah* the Ancients agree with Martellus that "Nothing remains beautiful and interesting except thought, because the thought is the life." (II, 255) Thus Shavian evolution ends in pure thought, a rather boring proposition to the conventional mind which cannot envision excitement without passion. To the conventional mind Shaw would say, as does Raphael at the end of *Farfetched Fables*, "On the contrary: intellectual passion, mathematical passion, passion for discovery and exploration: the mightiest of all the passions."<sup>8</sup> Thus to equate Shaw's idea of thought with the traditional concept of reason is a serious mistake. However, if we understand reason as the highest passion of the mind which acts vitally upon the other passions, constantly striving to make delicate adjustments, then Shaw may be called a "rationalist;" but if we understand reason as that which freezes thought in time and space by developing intellectual fixations upon temporary, human values, or as that mechanical thing which so self-confidently arrives at absolute judgments and eternal verities, then Shaw may not be called a "rationalist." For Shaw would have us look for and trust the values, such as they are, which are invested in the flesh, not in philosophical and theological cobwebs.

But to settle the question of Shaw's "pragmatism," perhaps we should go to Shaw himself. He has said that

. . . the weakness of Pragmatism is that most theories will work if you put your back into making them work, provided they have some point of contact with human nature. Hedonism will pass the pragmatic test as will Stoicism. Up to a certain point every social principle that is not absolutely idiotic works. . . (I, 823)

Further, he then declares that, in England, Pragmatism is "No-ism." (I, 823) Shaw may very well see the world as pluralistic, as James does, but only after a commitment has been made to a common body of religious assumptions. These assumptions are not ratiocinable postulates, but vital decisions about the nature and purpose of life. That

<sup>8</sup> Buoyant Billions, *Farfetched Fables*, . . . (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1948), p. 126.

is, one does not make philosophical commitments, one makes *real* commitments to the world's daily flesh. Now, "By their fruits ye shall know them," is Shaw's method as well as the pragmatist's; but, theoretically, there is a difference in the manner of judging these practical consequences. The pragmatist, if Shaw is right, could rationalize human good into almost any action. Shaw, however, using the vision of *frein vital*, would judge uniquely the vital profit involved by some measure or scale other than that of a rational discipline. In short, he would claim to be inspired. In the "Preface" to *Buoyant Billions* he says:

When I write a play I do not foresee nor intend a page of it from one end to the other: the play writes itself. I may reason out every sentence until I have made it say exactly what it comes to me to say; but whence and how and why it comes to me . . . I do not know.<sup>9</sup>

Shaw reasons, but reason comes after the vital fact. Reason justifies, rather than judges, the superrational vision. Shaw constantly reminds us of reason's frailty and of the uncertainty of life. A character of his says:

Remember: we are in the Unexpected Isles; and in the Unexpected Isles all plans fail. So much the better: plans are only jigsaw puzzles: one gets tired of them long before one can piece them together. . . . We are not here to fulfill prophecies and fit ourselves into puzzles, but to wrestle with life as it comes. And it never comes as we expect it to come.<sup>10</sup>

Shaw's epistemology is simple. In the Unexpected Isles men cannot know. He can only pull a guess out of his heart's mind and *bet* on it with his soul. There will be others wagering with their gusses, though they call them eternal verities; but, discounting accident, the prize will fall to the "fittest."

One more thing. The charge is sometimes made that the pragmatist is too often simply prudent. True or not for the pragmatist, Shaw is easily defended, by reference to his personal life (as has been shown) as well as to his plays. The Caesar who leads armies, leaps off towers, and disdains life by returning to the anticipated assassination in Rome is hardly a prudent man. Nor are Joan and Magnus without their feats of daring. If the Shavian heroes like Magnus are considered prudent, it is because they refuse to play trumps until trumps are needed; they are bold and courageous when it is the hour for those qualities. To be bold and courageous is not so much to know how but to know *when*.

Finally, it must be concluded that if Shaw is to be considered a "pragmatist," then his "pragmatism" must be sharply distinguished from that of the other pragmatists. William James, who was more likely to take the irrational leap than any of the others, probably has a good deal in common with Shaw; but even James insisted upon the cautious scientific method whenever possible. Shaw's point of view is stated most explicitly, I think, in the little scene between Jesus and Pilate in the "Preface" to *On The Rocks*. Jesus has warned Pilate to

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> The Simpleton, The Six, . . . (London: Constable and Company, 1949), p. 80.

beware of killing a thought which is new, rather to judge it by its fruits. Pilate protests that it may be the thought of the beast of prey striving to return. Jesus replies, "The beast of prey is not striving to return: the kingdom of God is striving to come. . ." Pilate then complains that he has no way of distinguishing between the blasphemies of his soldiers and the blasphemies of Jesus. Jesus answers that the world is doomed unless it does distinguish. Pilate wants to know why Jesus thinks that this is so. And Jesus says, "I do not think: I know. I have it from God." To be sure, Shaw was a relativist, but he was also a dogmatist, and let us hope that the twain shall meet, in men, more often. But Shaw, who thought grace was gambler's dice, was willing to risk by testing his dogma in the world's daily strife and flux, thus setting himself apart from those other dogmatists who coolly reside in their philosophical sanctum sanctorums.

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#### FROM THE SHAVIAN PAST      IX

*November 9. I came to Ayot St. Lawrence. G. B. S. met me at the station and motored me home, the light flashing on the narrow lane and the hedges, still brown and yellow and bronze. The house full of comfort and fires. He had just been writing a review of Chester-ton's book on Ireland, read aloud a good deal of the book in the evening — the review will be better. Talking of the Dublin statues, he says he had, when a child, a dream one night that he went out and went through the garden, and at the end of it opened a gate and saw the sky all filled with wonderful light, and in the centre was God. And he was in the form of the statue of William III in College Green.*

— Lady Augusta Gregory, writing in 1919  
in her *Journal* (ed. Lennox Robinson,  
New York, 1947).

# Adam and Eve: Evolving Archetypes in *Back to Methuselah*

Daniel Leary and Richard Foster<sup>1</sup>

Margaret Schauch suggests that "Shaw was affected . . . by the researches and speculations . . . of . . . Sir James Frazer and his peers. . . ." She notes that "Two recurrent symbolic figures stand out in Shaw's work. They are the clear-headed and unsentimental . . . Hero . . . and the Mother-Goddess, presented either as a human or an openly allegorical figure."<sup>2</sup> Shaw's Adam and Eve are just such symbolic figures of the essential male and the essential female. Indeed, much that T. S. Eliot suggests about Milton's Adam and Eve is applicable to Shaw's treatment of these same characters. Eliot writes:

In *Paradise Lost* Milton was not called upon for any of that understanding which comes from an affectionate observation of men and women. But such an interest in human beings was not required — indeed its absence was a necessary condition — for the creation of his figures of Adam and Eve. . . . They are the original *Man and Woman*, not types, but prototypes.<sup>3</sup>

Initially they act as a standard to measure deviations from the ideal norm throughout the play, but eventually one sees that man can and must go beyond even this norm. Fragmentation of these matter-bound ideal specimens begins almost immediately with the introduction of the 'adventurer' Cain and his luxury-loving highly ornamented wife, Lua. To keep a relatively full perspective of man's nature, one must consider man as Adam-Cain and woman as Eve-Lua.

Adam and Eve and the significance of their fragmentation and modification in *Back to Methuselah* can, perhaps, best be understood by relating them to Jack Tanner and Ann Whitefield of *Man and Superman*. In that earlier drama it becomes evident that the purpose of the male is the creative quest for higher expression of mind, while the purpose of the female is to assure the continuance of the race. Since woman is the vehicle of a more direct inheritance from life, since she is biologically primary and man biologically secondary, woman succeeds in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred in reducing man's intellectual creativity by turning him back to his specifically biological function — the function for which, according to Shaw, she invented him — which means turning him from adventurer or visionary, first, into the worshipper of herself — hence romance — and secondly, when the hook of family maintenance has been swallowed with the bait of sexual attraction, into a bread-winner for herself and her children. And thus, Tanner, the philosopher of Creative Evolution, is

<sup>1</sup> Professors Leary and Foster are, respectively, on the English faculties of Fordham University and the University of Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Schauch, "Symbolic Figures in G. B. Shaw," *Science & Society*, XXI (Summer, 1957), pp. 201-211. Arthur H. Nethercot, in his *Men and Supermen* (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 103-104, has also briefly dealt with Eve in *Back to Methuselah* as the "Mother Woman."

<sup>3</sup> T. S. Eliot, "Milton II," *On Poetry and Poets* (New York, 1957, p. 177).

ironically made the sacrifice of his philosophy; for it is really Creative Evolution — the Life-Force — that has triumphed through Ann's superlative sexual prowess: at the close, Tanner is about to father the Superman or his ancestor. *Man and Superman* opens with a funeral and, like *Don Giovanni*, closes with an invitation which is really a summons to death.

But Tanner's personal 'tragedy' need not be re-enacted endlessly. It seems to have been Shaw's belief that since sex is unnecessary for the primordial, self-splitting amoeba, sex is a man-willed device that is not permanently necessary, at all. And in *Back to Methuselah*, which he proffered as his second major contribution to the iconography of Creative Evolution, Shaw dramatizes against the evolutionary rise of mind the corresponding decline of sex as a social and biological tension between fragmentary opposites. This decline may be read as a progressive equalization of the sexes toward full intellectual identity; man, the agency of creative thought, is gradually freed from sensual and sentimental enslavement to woman; and woman, the guardian of the race's physical health and continuity, is gradually freed for more and more intellectual activity.

Shaw, moreover, gives full expression to his Manichean tendencies in *Back to Methuselah* by suggesting, through evolutionary modifications in his characters, not only the decline of sex, but also the elimination of matter with its corollaries, limited time and death. The rise and decline of matter and sex in this series of plays can be seen as a carefully graduated curve. In "In the Beginning," Shaw presents a Lilith who is not the Talmudic first wife of Adam, but rather the Creative Will, the Elan Vital, fragmenting itself into male and female, into Adari and Eve, in an evolutionary experiment. At first Adam and Eve are not fully committed to matter, but once they do make such a decision and accept sex, the dimensions of matter, and death, they become quite human. Next Shaw presents detailed portraits of ineffectual politicians, as well as a very human father and daughter. Soon, the play introduces characters such as Napoleon and the 'Elderly Gentleman' who seem to promise, in varying degrees, a return to the original archetypes with, however, evolutionary modifications. In the last sections of the play, characters are identified as Youth, Maiden, Oracle, Love, Authoritative Nymph, but these embodied abstractions are eventually displaced by the completely detached, almost sexless, and totally impersonal He-Ancient and She-Ancient. At the close of the play evolution has come full circle, for images of Adam and Eve return to the stage but seem to be reabsorbed into the spirit of Lilith.

The entire garden scene, of course, is an attempt to develop a new religious myth out of the Old Testament story. In general, the placing of Adam and Eve in the Garden before the will had been partly deadened by the weight of precedent provided an excellent basis for Shaw's ideas about Creative Evolution. According to Shaw, since Adam and Eve were without any accumulated heritage, they had to advance with rapid strides, and as their intellect was not fully developed, the Will which produces evolution without being subject to it, was more active than it needs to be now. Shaw dramatically realizes this accelerated process by having a deer fall dead and im-

mediately begin "changing into little white worms."<sup>4</sup> This accelerated evolution is repeated at the end of this cycle when "Condensed Recapitulation" makes it possible for human beings to be born + as were Adam and Eve — full grown and to become Elders in four years. There is also something of William Blake — perhaps even of John Milton — in Shaw's creatively evolutionary concept of the 'fall' in the Garden, for he seems to believe that having an innocent intellect and an immortal body was not enough. Man loses the Garden through a knowledge of good and evil, through sex, but in the struggle to return he gains a great deal more in augmented self-knowledge and intensified awareness.

All is dependent on man. Thus we have the following pivotal passage:

*Eve.* To desire, to imagine, to will, to create. . . .

*Serpent.* In one word, to conceive. That is the word that means both the beginning in imagination and the end in creation (p. 10).

This exchange, with its mention of four spiritual capacities and their identification with man's self-creation, has application to each of the five plays of this series. These four capacities of desiring, imagining, willing and creating are not merely "per accidens" reflexes like the jealousy, hate, fear and love which the Serpent identifies for Adam and Eve as they advance from innocence to knowledge; rather, they are essential human characteristics and are representative of Life-Force or Lilith working through and eventually beyond matter to attain new levels of self-awareness. The first play presents man's early discovery that something was wrong with his desire for a limited span of life and his growing desire for a return to longer life. "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas," Play II, reveals man imaginatively working out his desire into theory. Play III, "The Thing Happens," presents a limited realization of the theory through the wills of a few. Plays IV and V present two aspects of this future creation: "The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman" reveals the crushing discouragement of a short-lived human being before this ideal of the future; and the last play projects us "As Far As Thought Can Reach" to see where this possible creation might evolve.

In the first act of this Shavian myth the way is deftly prepared for the Serpent's message. Adam is first seen in the Garden between the dead deer on the ground and the Serpent coiled in the Tree of Knowledge — between death and Life. Adam first cries out despairingly, "But we [too] shall cease to be. . . . I will not have it, It must not be, I tell you" (p. 5). However, the accelerated Evolutionary Will working within him insists that change is more necessary than security. Thus, almost immediately, he retracts this statement and explains to Eve that, "I want to shed myself as a snake sheds its skin. I am tired of myself. And yet I must endure myself, not for a day or for many days but for ever" (p. 5). Eve comments: "It is strange that I should hear voices from all sides and you only from within" (p. 5). She hears the literal word but Adam, not yet burdened with sex duties, hears the spirit, the inner voice that insists he be more than he is. Eve with

<sup>4</sup> Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch (London, 1930), p. 6.

he greater drive toward the preservation of life, agrees with Adam in his first desire, but not in his second. She says:

*Eve.* No; I do not think about myself: what is the use? I am what I am: nothing can alter that. I think about you (p. 5).

Notice that these comments deal not only with longevity, the cardinal tenet of Shaw's new religion, but also establish, at their fundamental level, the distinct roles of male and female, both biological and cultural. Adam acts; he is the potential warrior, statesman, capitalist, artist, thinker, the potential builder of civilizations, the essential and elemental male as doer. Eve, on the other hand, keeps; she cares for the father, for the child, for the dwelling; she is the custodian of the seed, the keeper of the enabling sexual mystery.

Lilith is the Life-Force that walks in the garden in the cool of the evening, and the serpent seems to be her voice. Consequently, the Serpent is a complex figure reflecting characteristics of both sexes. As a phallic symbol, he represents the voice of our first parents' will, of their sex desire; as a creature that shuffles off his mortal coil he represents birth and death; as a Blakean "dragon" figure, he can be seen as the necessary revolution before the "Higher Innocence;" and as the Serpent in the Shavian Garden, his action makes it clear that if there is any apparent evil in the Garden, it is an accidental by-product of the Life-Force's creative experiments and not an eternal mark on man's degraded soul.

It is the Serpent that tells Adam and Eve they are limited only by their own vision, that instead of asking "Why?", they should ask "Why not?" (p. 7). They are the result of a fragmented Lilith and, in terms of this religion of evolutionary pantheism, they are a deity and can make something out of nothing, can make their desires come true.

The subtle Serpent, the voice of the Creative Will, tempts man and woman to explore the possibilities of sex, matter and time.

*The Serpent.* Man is deeper in his thought than I am. The woman knows that there is no such thing as nothing; the man knows that there is no such thing as tomorrow (p. 14).

Eve reacts to the Serpent's praise by succumbing to the temptations of sex and matter. Eve's insistence that there must be "something" leads her to accept the sole task of populating and caring for the physical world — her assumption of this Astarte role gradually reduces the play's various Adams to son-lovers searching for an ideal woman to take care of them. Indeed, Adam's reduction starts when he wills to accept the possibility that there may be no tomorrow for him. This is a serious temptation, for it leads to procrastination, a weakness that will eventually force man to reverse his decision and once again seek immortality. This tendency toward irresponsibility is given dramatic objectification by Cain's laugh which becomes his identifying trait, as well as by various male politicians later in the pentateuch who shrug off their duties with dismissive laughter.

The acceptance of sex and death in the garden, at worst is a "felix culpa," for the growing complexity of our primogenitors' lives is in

fact the Life-Force in operation attempting through trial and error to arrive at the best means to use life. This growing complexity can be observed in the changing tone and vocabulary of the dialogue. At first the interchanges are simple:

*Eve.* Yes: that must not be. But it might be.

*Adam.* No, I tell you it must not be. I know that it must not be.

*Eve.* We both know it. How do we know it? (p. 5).

Soon, however, after this kindergarten phase, in which the Serpent teaches them the meaning of the words, kill, death, love, fear jealousy and hope, Adam reflects his movement from "The Songs of Innocence" to "The Songs of Experience," in the growing complexity of his utterance:

*Adam.* I was troubled with the burden of eternal being; but I was not confused in my mind. If I did not know that I loved Eve, at least I did not know that she might cease to love me, and come to love some other Adam and desire my death (p. 16).

In this new and complex life, Adam and Eve instinctively seek for security and vow to be "Wife and Husband" (p. 18), the inverted order of the phrase suggesting that Adam's reduction has already started, that his sense of exploration has been over-shadowed by Eve's instinct for survival.

Act II opens some three hundred years later, at a time when there are many new Adams and Eves and fragmentation is well advanced. Adam has assured his role of a provider for his family, and when Eve talks of manna he grumbles, "Go on with your spinning; and do not sit there idle while I am straining my muscles for you" (p. 34). The Garden of Eden has been transformed from a kindergarten into a "kitchen garden," into which comes not the Serpent, but Cain, bringing not the temptation of sex but of violence.

On one level Cain and his wife, Lua, represent the illusion lovers, the people who in "Don Juan in Hell" preferred the pleasures of Hell to the truth of Heaven. Yet, carnal blusterer that he is, Cain imagines possibilities greater than himself, and can boast to Eve: "I do not know what I want, except that I want to be something higher and nobler than this stupid old digger whom Lilith made to help you to bring me into the world and whom you despise now that he has served your turn" (p. 30). Eve, the careful mother, accuses Cain of being, not Superman, but "Anti-man," and she sees his intuition of the life of the mind as the bully play-boy's dream of selfishness and idleness. But Cain, the slayer who compensates for Abel's blood by endangering his own life as he sheds the blood of others, has nevertheless a true instinct "which tells me that death plays its part in life" (pp. 32-33). As an active, undomesticated male extension of Adam's death wish, Cain, like the more sophisticated and philosophized munitions king, Undershaft, is the agency by which the ground is cleared for the evolutionary production of higher forms of life.

Eve, as a creature of hope, rejects the patient acceptance of Adam and the ruthless impatience of Cain. She dreams of the 'Life-Bringers,' those who "never want to die, because they are always creating either

things or wisdom" (p. 32). The possibility of total destruction through the Cains of the future stirs Mother Eve to put her faith in "Enoch, who walks on the hills, and hears the Voice continually, and has given up his will to do the will of the Voice, and has some of the Voice's greatness" (p 32). The character of Enoch represents an important foreshadowing of the concluding play's Ancients, since, according to "Genesis," he was the father of Methuselah and was himself translated to heaven while still alive.

The second play of the series, "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas," introduces the second stage of man's struggle to better himself. Part I ended with Eve's desire that Enoch might have more time to develop, and in "The Gospel" that desire is given imaginative form through a scientific theory. In a fuller and more unifying sense, Part I is the scriptural text and Part II is the sermon, the application, the exegesis of that text. Anyone who failed to notice how Shaw had injected new biological significance into the old legends and religious symbols of Western culture could not help understanding after listening to the new Gospel.

The entire section is built up of the struggle between two forces: the politicians, Lubin and Burge, representing the practical and materialistic view toward this religion, and the brothers, Franklyn and Conrad Barnabas, representing the visionary and spiritual view. It soon becomes clear that no merger is possible between matter and spirit for the forces operate on entirely different levels: the politicians are completely irresponsible; the Barnabas Brothers are completely dedicated.

In the preface Shaw wonders "whether the human animal, as he exists at present, is capable of solving the social problems raised by his own aggregation, or, as he calls it, his civilization" (p. xiv). Burge and Lubin give ample reason for worry: they have not, as Shaw pictures them, advanced very far beyond the masculine capacities of Adam and Cain. Burge is most like that "old vegetable" Adam. His stupidity has limited his rudimentary conscience, but not his brute ability to hold England together. But Adam did not need brains simply to hoe the garden, any more than Burge needs them to maintain the simple requirements of the 'status quo.' And like Adam, Burge has a good solid wife to keep him at it: "I want to cultivate my garden," he says wearily to Franklyn Barnabas, "I am not interested in politics. . . . I haven't a scrap of ambition. I went into politics because my wife shoved me into them, bless her!" (p. 49). As dangerous as dangerous as Burge is, he is a simple digger, a limited plodder. Lubin, however, is intelligent and ruthless, and reminds one of Cain, having both his impulsiveness and his amorality. "You have no continuity," Burge says to him; "and a man without continuity can have neither conscience nor honor from one day to another" (p. 71). Lubin's lack of conscience and lack of a responsible historical sense combine with his playboy's capacity — again like Cain's — for trivial romantic dalliance. His flirtation with Savvy has a certain charm; but in terms of the play's values, it must be found, in a man pushing seventy, a sign of virtual adolescence. Unlike Shotover in his relationship with Ellie Dunn, Lubin is not a Superman attempting, at least figuratively, to

revitalize his energies through the stimulation of sex; he is only a cynical politician wooing the new generation's vote. Seen as a single force, Lubin-Burge merge into a complex, relatively intelligent Adam, presenting on the one hand a choric Horatian intelligence vegetating in a state of amused detachment from life, on the other hand, a sexually agitated and irresponsibly adolescent Cain. If, at last, civilization has evolved the concept of the statesman, it is clear that man has become far too involved in matter to fulfill adequately the demands of that role.

The Brothers Barnabas, like the Serpent, are the voice of new possibilities. Conrad, the scientist, and Franklyn, the theologian, have combined to produce a new "metabiological gospel" which proposes that though man now dies in intellectual adolescence, he can will to live longer and so attain wisdom and intellectual adulthood and implement it, through longer life, in action. Shaw emphasizes the importance of this new partnership:

*Franklyn.* Unless this withered thing religion, and this dry thing science, have come alive in our hands, alive and intensely interesting, we may just as well go out and dig the garden until it is time to dig our graves (pp. 43-44).

That is to say, either Creative Evolution has a meaning or we are no more advanced than the Philistine, Adam. But Shaw links the brothers and their gospel to the very highest aspirations of man. Indeed, he suggests that Franklyn, by combining the will of religion with the intellect of science, is the spiritual father of the newly evolving Methuselah, when he has him say: "I felt it to be my vocation to walk with God, like Enoch" (p. 39).

Savvy is the physical daughter of Franklyn Barnabas, but she is not fated to live beyond the "normal" span of man's life. She reflects in too many ways the conservative qualities of the old Eve; for she is a woman neither committed to the practical stupidities of Cain and Adam as seen in Lubin and Burge, nor capable of understanding, though sympathetic to, the contemplative projects of Abel and Enoch as seen in the Brothers Barnabas. Imaginatively, Savvy rejects both extremes and continues to cling to the old compromise between body and soul.

Savvy's very name suggests the savage new generation's upper class society whose total lack of responsibility results in inability to cooperate with the Life Force. The self-centered morality of Savvy, as the closed morality of Lubin-Burge, constitutes a matter-orientated society whose only hope for development, perhaps for survival, rests in a spiritual conviction that life means something beyond matter, sex and time, that life must be lived responsibly. Consequently, Shaw draws a new, matter-detached Eve from the poverty-stricken working classes, not only to show that the Will can suddenly take effect anywhere on any social strata, but also to imply that the millennium will only occur when poverty and classes have been abolished, when the social conscience is free of artificial material considerations. The young clergyman, Haslam, the male figure singled out for longevity, also is free of material considerations and appears as a simple, frank and vital soul.

Part III, "The Thing Happens," is a transitional period during which the first examples of the longlived appear. Shaw's world picture of A.D. 2170 presents the "whites" as embodying man's irresponsible stupidity, while the "colored" races represent all earthly knowledge. Shaw, however, explains that the "colored" races simply reach maturity faster than the innately superior "whites." Having willed to live long enough to reach this necessary maturity, Haslam, who once had seemed "boyish" and had been over-shadowed by the physical vitality of Savvy, now has become the superannuated Archbishop and the parlormaid has become the perennial Domestic Minister, Mrs. Lutestring. As longlivers they are about to revive the slipping white race by re-enacting at a higher level the original creative union of Adam and Eve. Certain of their sexual qualifications are important as signs both of sexual continuity and of evolutionary progress. Mrs. Lutestring, utterly revolted by Burge-Lubin's childish liveliness, "never was very fond of children . . ." (p. 121). The Domestic Minister, with her ideal of dispassionate efficiency in human affairs, is clearly quite different from Eve, the instinctively domestic and universally life-protective Mother principle. We must interpret this as a sign of evolutionary progress, as we must the utter passionlessness of the Lutestring-Haslam union. Adam and Eve, we presume, in both youth and middle age were bound by love — as were Haslam and Savvy, but now the Archbishop and the Domestic Minister, both well along in their third century, are bound only by an intellectual awareness of their social duty. Procreation is not self-indulgence; it is a matter of will. It is noteworthy that the one sexual continuity, and a typically Shavian one, between Adam and Eve and the longlivers, is that the female is the instigator of consummation: "Have you time to come home with me and discuss the matter?" Mrs. Lutestring inquires. "With pleasure," the gallant Archbishop acquiesces (p. 127).

At the same time continuing fragmentation of the archetypes can be seen in Shaw's depiction of the various leaders of the future. There is the Accountant-General, Barnabas, the scientist descendant of the capable if dull Conrad of the "Gospel." His rejection of all but statistical truth labels him as the Adam of science, a clod and a plodder, dissociated from the imaginative freedom of Enoch's and Franklyn's vision. He is also Cain-like in his primitive instinct to annihilate the long livers, to annihilate life itself: "What reason can you give for killing a snake?" he cries in justification; "Nature tells you to do it" (p. 128).

The President, Burge-Lubin, combines the stupidity of his illustrious forebearers with none of their modicum of intelligence. He has the trivially adolescent sexual preoccupation of Lubin without Lubin's imaginative intelligence: "Oh, these sex episodes!" he shudders, after unsuccessfully "propositioning" the modern Lua, the negress Minister of Health: "Why can I not resist them?" (p. 100). And he has Burge's stupidity and affable bluster without either the moral asset of Burge's crude conscience or the practical asset of his solid Wife-Mother. Together Burge-Lubin and Barnabas — the combination of cheap politics and narrow-minded science — are placed in admirable dramatic contrast to the scientific religion Shaw envisioned in Part II and which is fulfilled in Part IV.

Part IV, "Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman," takes place in the year 3000, a time when Mrs. Lutestring's worst suspicions have apparently proven themselves in the events of the years between A.D. 2170 and 3000: the shortliving white race, mixing with the colored races in an instinctive attempt to replenish its physical and intellectual vitality, has actually deserted its traditional homeland and become absorbed into the alien life and blood of the Middle East, thus symbolically regressing to its source.

The principal dramatic tension is achieved by juxtaposing an elderly gentleman representing the shortlived minority with Zoo, a young female longliver. Their Bergsonian difficulties in communication present yet another type of regression to source, for the human race would appear to be returning to the original innocence of Adam and Eve, though on a higher level. The old terms taught by the Serpent are forgotten and are as useless to Zoo as matter will seem to the Ancients in Play V. The conflict between the two characters is particularly significant in terms of the sexual evolution it seems to reflect. Zoo looks like a "dowdy and serious" Savvy, who looked like Eve; and Zoo has an official mother-nurse relationship to "Daddy" since shortlivers, however old and wise, suffer terrible attacks of discouragement in the Ireland of the longlivers. "You have many of the ways and weaknesses of a baby," she says to him. "No doubt that is why I feel called on to mother you. You certainly are a very silly little Daddy" (p. 152). The old man, proud descendant of the early English heroes, Bulge and Bluebin — Burge and Lubin, of course — becomes annoyed at these offenses to his dignity, and tries at one point to impress upon Zoo the superiority of his sex, age, and material possessions. This arrogance arouses in Zoo the instinct to kill her charge whom she suddenly sees as an "evil child;" one must presume this to be, as an expression of the Life-Force, a good instinct of the superior life forms to obliterate — as Cain instinctively slew animals and inferior men — the crippled and inadequate forms. In Zoo, we have come a long way from Mother Eve, to whom all life was indiscriminately dear. Though Zoo resists her murderous instinct, the traumatic event changes her politics, and she becomes a 'liberal' dedicated to the principle of exterminating the world's shortlivers. As Zoo points out, "a good garden needs weeding . . ." (p. 172). This change in Zoo, and the elderly gentleman's gradual conversion, through 'discouragement,' to the clear-sighted realism of the longlivers, are prophetic of the end of present day civilization. The old man, who combines the best qualities of Burge and Lubin, is the last and finest flower of the shortlivers. In the end it is inevitable that he should say to the oracle, "I cannot live among people to whom nothing is real. . . . I implore to be allowed to stay" (pp. 201-202). But it is equally inevitable that this crippled, elderly baby should crumple at the touch of the Oracle, who is his new, highly dispassionate, wholly objective, and potently intense supermother.

The adventurer-destroyer facet of man's personality is also rejected in this play. "The Man of Destiny," Napoleon — the full name is "Cain Adamson Charles Napoleon" — meets or rather intrudes upon the Oracle and wants to know "How am I to satisfy my genius by fighting until I die?" The Oracle had but one solution for this Nietz-

schein Superman, and it was that he should die immediately. However, in contrast to the Elderly Gentleman, who dies nobly, Napoleon, this narrow, pompous "war-god" who sought personal glory, is — like the much more amiable Commander in "Don Juan in Hell" — turned into a living statue, transfixated and impotent, to contemplate, perhaps for eternity, the statue of Falstaff, the saint of sensible cowardice.

There is a hint in this section that the immortality looked forward to goes beyond the concept of personal deathlessness. These plays are, after all, myths calculated to encourage us to live more fully, more responsibly. Man must learn to think of his life, not in the materialistic sense of a few years, but in the Bergsonian sense of mankind's duration. Shaw wanted to present a religion that would encourage men to behave like gentlemen, and in the Shavian vocabulary 'gentleman' has a very central meaning. Shaw tells us that

the real gentleman says . . . I hope and I shall strive to give to my country . . . more than it has given to me; so that when I die my country shall be richer for my life. . . . What the country needs, and should seek through its social deduction, its social sense, and religious feeling, is to create gentlemen and when you create them, all things shall be added unto you.<sup>5</sup>

The Elderly Gentleman finally comes to realize that his life is important only as a fulfillment of something greater; and the most poignant aspect of this 'tragedy' is that Shaw apparently identifies himself with the Elderly Gentleman and unflinchingly admits that his own class with its charm, its eloquence, its art, its Bernard Shaws, must be removed even as Heartbreak House must be blown up, to make room for a classless society even more fully dedicated to the idea of mankind's development.

At the close of *Man and Superman* another gentleman, Jack Tanner, is invited to the feast that will be his death, but there is the cheerful promise that a Superman will develop through his sacrifice. The Elderly Gentleman's death gives no such hope for man. The opening scene presented the old man with his back to the land looking out to the sea. Caught between one world that is dead and another that is yet to be born, he is psychologically ready to have his ideals stripped away. Thus he claimed that "blood is thicker than water," but by the end of the play he leaves his family in disgust. He talked of "Bulge and Bluebin and their majestic spirit," but abruptly loses all faith in politics. He had respect for orthodox faiths but at the close sees the mummery of the Oracle's ceremony. His civilized and gentlemanly manners collapse under the strain of reality to a point where Zoo finds it almost necessary to destroy him. He defended the value of his short life but finally prefers to die than go on living it. His disenchantment reaches its nadir in his contemplation of the Envoy, his son-in-law, who represents the complete disintegration of the political state under the selfish, uncontrolled, cowardly, lying, even drunken, rule of unthinking politicians who are all related at least in law to Lubin and Burge. In this world of senseless bloodshed and political lies he finds himself to be a gentleman without a cause. The Oracle — called "The Pythoness" and situated in a fountain where "serpents curl . . . in the

<sup>5</sup> The Socialism of Bernard Shaw, ed. James Fuchs (New York, 1926), p. 82.

vapor" (p. 197) — like the Serpent in the Garden, is the voice of the Life-Force and once again has prepared the world for a new and vital experiment: the old Eve has disappeared, the Cain figure has been destroyed, and Part IV ends with the death of the old Adam.

Having explored his 'dark night of the soul' Shaw returns to take us in Part V, "As Far As Thought Can Reach," into the year A.D. 31, 920, where a group of young people is discovered, significantly enough, in a garden, dabbling in the arts, fulfilling their leisure and their intelligence. There are no vestiges of the shortlivers remaining. There are, moreover, no more simple producers, no more heroes, no more statesmen. The last representative of unfettered scientism disappeared centuries ago with the maniacal Barnabas, and even Pygmalion, the harmless scientist of this play, who is checked and qualified by the imagination in his dependence on Martellus, is doomed, in the evolutionary scheme of things, to extinction.

The evolutionary movement of this series of plays, the discarding of sex, time and matter, has reached its logical end. As one of the Ancients explains to the younger longlivers, man now lives long enough to put away the things of a child, and man's "body is the last doll to be discarded" (p. 251). The pattern of this series of plays has been the movement from desire, to imagination, to will, to creation. In Part IV man made himself into a more responsible human being by accepting and acting in terms of a long life. Now, in Part V man seeks immortal responsibility by becoming pure spirit. Sex, science, politics, war, art and all the other concepts so engrossing to the Elderly Gentleman are put away as dolls fit only for children.

On stage it was not enough to have the Ancients talking about the shaping and creating of vortexes. Shaw sought for an objective and dramatic way of presenting this new non-material creation in the process of happening, and to do this he hit upon the theory of Condensed Recapitulation. Soon after the play's opening, one of the She-Ancients arrives among the children to break open the egg in which a full grown girl is ready to be delivered. This egg, from which the teen-age Newly Born emerges after a few taps of the She-Ancient's wand, appears to be a community project and responsibility. The She-Ancient's antiseptic role as mother in this 'delivery' is significant, for it totally dispenses with the services of a nurse, even one like Zoo, who could have had more or less human relations with the child. Mother Eve is no longer necessary. In the Ancients, Creative Evolution has at last arrived at man as Seer and thinker, and subordinate human capacities and talents have been sloughed off along the way. In them there is apparently neither sexual activity nor biologically significant sexual difference.

The youths, however, are not yet done with sex and art. Shaw associates art with sentimentality, romantic love, and the body. Ecrasia, who seems to be related to Spenser's Acrasia and the decadent Bowre of Bliss — related, too, to the earlier Lua — is the simultaneous priestess of both sex and art. The defection of The Maiden from sex and Martellus from art has the same significance as Don Juan's spurning the devil's temptations in the hell sequence of *Man and Superman*. The spirit of Ecrasia's reign must have an end; it will either grow up or be destroyed by Pygmalion.

Shaw links this dissatisfaction with art and matter to his belief that man must transcend sex. He presents the artist Martellus as one who, having grown dissatisfied with fleshly beauty as the object of his art and having turned to portraying Ancients, only to give that up in turn because he could not make them 'live,' has turned at least to Pygmalion, the scientist, in his artist's quest to make a living thing. They produce two human puppets, Ozymandias and Cleopatra. These automata, whose names suggest the futility of masculine power and feminine wiles, are portrayed as creatures who have no original impulses, who are slaves of internal reflexes, and thus are related to Adam and Eve. They also reflect Cain and Lua in that they are selfish, vain, and totally lacking in self control, dedication and a sense of responsibility. All the emotions taught to Adam and Eve by the Serpent are found in these creatures: jealousy, love, hate, fear, desire to kill, and all of them are seen to be motor reflexes. Like savages and children, they resent injuries and seek to requite them by inflicting immediate suffering on those who make them suffer; they are, therefore, revengeful. They are sensitive and readily take offense; having taken it, they sulk until they are appeased by flattery or apologies. They are, in short, human beings, and in their brief moments on the stage, they "recapitulate" most of the mistakes made by the plays' various Adams and Eves. Their behavior after killing Pygmalion is rather like that of the biblical Adam and Eve after the fall. When the He-Ancient appears they are terrified and wildly accuse each other of the crime. To the end their lives they are victims of the illusion that they are important. In their destruction by fire, man's body is symbolically disposed of, and the time of the spirit's apocalypse in Shaw's cyclical epic has finally arrived.

The Ancients have come to the very same position of choice as did Adam and Eve in the first play. Adam and Eve were also afraid of accidental death but they found an answer in matter. The Ancients seek for the answer by losing matter.

*The He-Ancient.* I am the eternal life, the perpetual resurrection; but (striking his body) this structure, this organism, this make-shift, can be made by a boy in a laboratory. . . . Sooner or later, its destruction is certain (p. 250).

Indeed, in the "Sixth and Last Fable" of *Farfetched Fables* (1948), written when Shaw was ninety-one, it seems as though the Ancients succeeded in their effort to disengage themselves from matter. The teacher in this fable explains to his students that "the Disembodied Races still exist as Thought Vortexes, are penetrating our thick skulls in their continual pursuit of knowledge and power, since they need our hands and brains as tools in that pursuit."<sup>6</sup> At the close of this fable the Angel Raphael descends upon the group as an "embodied thought" and explains his presence by saying, "If the body can become a vortex, the vortex can also become a body."<sup>7</sup> Apparently the need for a dialectic between matter and spirit has reasserted itself and a new cyclical action has begun.<sup>8</sup>

At the very end of "As Far As Thought Can Reach" Eve surveys her progeny, and as a mother baffled at what has happened but proud

<sup>6</sup> Buoyant Billions, *Farfetched Fables, & Shakes Versus Shaw* (London, 1950), p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

## Shaw, Farleigh and a Collection

by William Zeltmann<sup>1</sup>

In 1940, John Farleigh, the English artist, wood engraver and muralist, published his *Graven Image: An Autobiographical textbook*. In this book, a most competent and interesting volume on the art of wood engraving, Farleigh relates his career up to that time and describes the technique of the art.

Competent and interesting as the volume is on wood engraving, it is most interesting and most valuable for its chapter on Shaw's collaboration with Farleigh in creating the illustrations for *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*. An additional chapter is given to the prints for *Short Stories, Scraps and Shavings, Prefaces*, the Limited Edition of *Back to Methuselah*, printed in the U. S. A., a book-jacket for *The Political Madhouse in America and Nearer Home* and a poster for *On the Rocks*, along with numerous other books, illustrated by Farleigh. In these chapters, Shaw's letters, drawings and water colors are reproduced with Farleigh's prints, in their various states, to illustrate Farleigh's account of his and Shaw's effort: the unique record of a unique collaboration of author and artist.

The letters Shaw wrote to Farleigh in this enterprise were filled with brilliant art criticism, as a few excerpts will show:

Just consider whether she [the Black Girl] is — for so critical a God-seeker — a little too brutish.

... Michelangelo placed himself at the head of all the artists by making all his subjects geniuses.

I . . . have that outside lift of my brows; emphasized by what are almost secondary moustaches; and without them I should look as brainless as the Sistine Madonna.

... consistency is the enemy of enterprise just as symmetry is the enemy of art.

My fellow should be rigid, straight, inhuman, threatening, ruthless, with a horrible sort of clean beauty and athletic training to emphasize his mechanical cruelty.

Most important is the Christ. . . . In the story he presents the cup to her; and he would obviously — since it is both a funny conjuring trick and act of kindness — smile as he did it. But in the picture it is the girl who is the humorous conjuror with the kindly smile. . . .

Ecclesiastes looks dead like a figure in a frieze. ["It was taken from a frieze," Farleigh wrote. "Shaw scored on this point as he did on a good many other occasions; in fact, I discovered I was learning the business of illustrating from the best master possible — a producer of plays, as well as an author of them."]

The first painter who is sensible and human enough to paint a Suffer Little Children with Christ smiling at a child standing on his knee will completely snuff out Holman Hunt's "Light of the World."

. . . I think that the sacred trinity of Holbein, Altdorfer and Hogarth demand that the story should be told by gestures.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Zeltmann's relationship to the Farleigh wood engravings for *The Black Girl* is made clear later in this article.

of her "clever" children, pronounces that all's well." Adam, on the other hand, thinks it is "foolishness" to have carried this evolution thing so far. Cain vanishes with a characteristic romantic flourish by quoting one of his descendants: "Out, out, brief candle!" And finally Lilith, summing up the entire Pentateuch, can say:

*Lilith.* . . . after passing a million goals they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter, to the whirlpool in pure intelligence that, when the world began, was a whirlpool in pure force. . . . I am Lilith: I . . . compelled my enemy Matter, to obey a living soul. . . . Of life only is there no end; and though unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines (pp. 261-262).

Shaw closed his Metabiological Pentateuch in a garden and with a heightened vision, with an apocalypse and resurrection that like the Bible, presented again a paradise, but one that was non-material. The first four plays of the series ended with a death or a discouragement that proved to be but one aspect of the regression-progression pattern of the 'Rebirth Archetype.' Adam's loss of vision and Cain's death-wish gave birth to Eve's desire to go beyond sex, Lubin and Burge's stupid materialism force the Barnabas imagination beyond matter, the Elderly Gentleman's despair which rejects Cain, Lubin and Burge is but the birth trauma of a will to go beyond time, and in the final play, the last of the human illusions, Ozymandias and Cleopatra, are destroyed by the Ancients who go beyond art, nature, science, and even religion, in their self-creation. Thus Shaw has his He-Ancient say:

*The He-Ancient.* . . . I . . . ceased to walk over the mountains with my friends, and walked alone; for I found that I had creative power over myself but none over my friends. And then I ceased to walk on the mountains; for I saw the mountains were dead (p. 251).

The He-Ancient is the fulfillment of Enoch, who walked on the mountains with God. But this Enoch of the future needs no mountains, and has discovered that he is his own God.

<sup>8</sup> Of course this same characteristic of continuity, so deeply rooted in Shaw's philosophy, is to be found in the structures of most of his plays. One has only to think of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Saint Joan* or *Major Barbara* for confirmation of Shaw's statement to Paul Green: "My plays are interludes, as it were, between two greater realities. And the meaning of them lies in what follows them. The beginning of one of my plays takes place exactly where an unwritten play ended. And the ending of my written play concludes where another play begins." Paul Green, *Dramatic Heritage* (New York, 1953, pp. 125-126).

Aircraftsman Shaw, alias Colonel Lawrence, Prince of Damascus, etc., who is among other things a keen book fancier, saw yesterday the set of proofs you sent me (many thanks) and highly approved of them, but made the devastating remark that no Arab ever sat with his legs crossed. We shall have to assume that Mahomet was an exception to all rules.<sup>2</sup> I think the carrion bird was a mistake of mine. It destroys the sense of space in the sky instead of suggesting it.

The prophet seems to be swallowing a colossal banana because the girl has not her fingers in her ears, and might be running to post a letter. One must always connect the figures by some gesture that knits the parts of the picture into a story.

The lion is too obscene for so sublime a moment. He should not be degraded from the King Dick picture.

At last the book has gone to press. It isn't half a bad job, is it? The girl makes a charming Leit-motif running through all the pictures. Anyhow it's been a bit of fun.

The Shaw-Farleigh collaboration began with a letter from Shaw, dated May 8, 1932, saying that Mr. William Maxwell of Clark's of Edinburgh had told Shaw that Farleigh could design, draw and engrave pictures as part of a book, which you will understand is something more than making a picture and sticking it in a book as an "illustration." On the back of the letter was a list of twelve suggested subjects. The pictures Shaw desired were so well delineated that Farleigh comments in his *Graven Image*: "With his unerring skill he had in this one introductory letter, made the whole job so clear that I was able to begin work without further discussion. . . . The situation was unique; an author had visualized his book as a series of pictures, and that very first problem of the illustrator was done for me."

Letter followed letter, and the mutually creative effort progressed with Shaw not only supplying the artist Farleigh with word pictures and much advice; but with a dozen sketches and water colors of which Farleigh says: "The visual power behind them is extra-ordinary — they contained everything to make his point clear." At one point in this joint venture, Farleigh, while talking on the phone, told Shaw that his drawing was improving so much that he would not need Farleigh before long. To this Shaw replied with a chuckle: "I did not set out to be Shakespeare but Michelangelo."

Farleigh comments further on Shaw's drawing: "His color like his drawing, was vigorous and direct in idea; these drawings are excellent examples of conceptional drawing; just as children's drawings are. This is not to say that Shaw's drawings are childish, far from it. That subtle quality of pure and unadulterated expression that so many artists are trying to recapture, perhaps not entirely mistakenly, from child art, is not peculiar to children's drawings: it exists in mature work of art. It is, perhaps, best described as the triumph of pure feeling over the limitations of material . . . Shaw's drawings are mature and highly skillful in thought and intension; their value to me lay in their intellectual clarity."

<sup>2</sup> See the engravings in question on p. 54 of the Standard Edition (London, 1934 and subsequent reprintings).

Farleigh's comments on Shaw's talent add weight to the remarks of Archibald Henderson, who, in his *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century*, while seeking to explain Shaw's dramatic and literary genius, states: "Remembering that he studied art as a lad and had a natural talent for sketching, we shall make a nearer approximation to the truth in using the language of the artist rather than that of the litterateur and frankly classify him as a caricaturist."

In the light of Farleigh's words, Henderson's remark is probably far more perceptive than he imagined. For aside from Shaw's boyhood ambition to be a painter and his career as a London art critic, Shaw's point of view in all things was that of the many-sided artist. Henderson had earlier touched upon this aspect of Shaw's genius in his earlier *Playboy and Prophet* when he said, "It is no idle assertion — one Shaw is fond of making — that Mozart and Michelangelo count for a great deal in the making of his mind." Should we not say that Shaw was a complete artist of life?

It is interesting to speculate to what extent Shaw was following in the tradition of Albrecht Dürer when he decided to illustrate his *Black Girl* with woodcut prints; for Henderson tells us that his work-room walls at 10 Adelphi Terrace in London, where he lived for thirty years, were just about hidden with Dürer reproductions. Could it be that Shaw, when writing about the development of the idea of God in the mind of mankind in the *Black Girl*, thought of Dürer's depiction, let us say, of the Apocalypse or Revelations, and that it would be quite a good idea to illustrate his treatise with fine woodcut prints?

Aside from the importance of these chapters for the study and understanding of Shaw, what wonderful documentation they would provide for a collection of Shaw's letters and drawings, Farleigh's prints and related *Black Girl* material. And that is just what the chapters did for the writer of this article and Mr. Earl R. Mesnier, both of St. Louis, who, a few years ago were able to assemble the letters, drawings and water colors of Shaw and Farleigh's drawings, prints and progressive proofs with other *Black Girl* items into the *Black Girl* Collection. Imagine my surprise and delight when I came across Farleigh's *Graven Image* at the St. Louis Public Library where I had gone to seek information about the artist of the illustrations for *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*. We later were to learn that the chapter on the *Black Girl* had appeared previously in the *London Mercury* for March 1937.

The numerous items of the *Black Girl* Collection, which were acquired in London at various times and brought to the United States include twelve drawings and water colors by Shaw; thirty-four drawings by Farleigh; a set of twenty-six signed, mounted prints; one hundred twenty-seven progressive proofs; eleven autographed letters signed by Shaw, eighteen pages; three typewritten letters signed by Shaw, five pages; nine autographed, signed notes by Shaw; the contract; two first editions, one with signed print; two presentation copies, one to H. G. Wells; and other miscellaneous items. The Shaw drawings are mounted with twenty-six prints of Farleigh's, some of them juxtaposed. In addition to the strictly *Black Girl* material, there are two self-port-

traits by Shaw and two portraits of Shaw by Farleigh, one, the final sepia print.

All this creativity came about because Shaw, in his seventy-sixth year, while being held up in Africa for five weeks, wrote *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, and wanted a series of woodcuts to be part of the book.

This collection, which makes a most interesting exhibit, has been on display at the St. Louis City Art Museum, the Bernard Shaw Room of the Hotel Sherman in Chicago, at the time of the Shaw Centennial in 1956, and at a dramatized reading of the *Black Girl* the following year by the Shaw Society of Chicago. It has also been on display at Oberlin College, the University of Illinois, the University of Miami and Northwestern University.

As an insight into the dramatic mind of Shaw, the letters and drawings of this collection are of great interest, for they are but a reflection of his knowledge of the stage, where he was constantly concerned with gesture and movement, groupings and relationships. At any rate, imagine a similar collection of Shakespeariana!

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FROM THE SHAVIAN PAST X

*Finally as a supreme reason [for "the idea of writing the book which ultimately became 'The Old Wives' Tale'] I had the example and the challenge of Guy de Maupassant's "Une Vie." In the nineties we used to regard "Une Vie" with mute awe, as being the summit of achievement in fiction. And I remember being very cross with Mr. Bernard Shaw because, having read "Une Vie" at the suggestion (I think) of Mr. William Archer, he failed to see in it anything very remarkable. Here I must confess that, in 1908, I read "Une Vie" again, and in spite of a natural anxiety to differ from Mr. Bernard Shaw, I was gravely disappointed with it. . . .*

— Arnold Bennett, Preface to  
*The Old Wives' Tale*

# Bernard Shaw—Ten Years After (1950-1960)

## A Transcript of the Second MLA Conference of Scholars on Shaw

edited by Arthur O. Lewis, Jr., and Stanley Weintraub<sup>1</sup>

[The second annual attempt to gather together American Shaw scholars to talk to (and at) each other about problems of mutual interest took place on December 29, 1960 — on a snowy morning on the last day of the meeting of the Modern Language Association in Philadelphia. In order to keep the discussion within time limits, it was limited to four questions, copies of which were made available to conferees before the meeting. They preface an abridgement of the transcript of the discussion below.

The editors of the conference transcripts were, respectively, conference secretary and discussion leader. There were twenty-four conferees present.]

1. Immediately after Shaw's death, attacks were directed at him and his work. Were these attacks, largely but not entirely expressed in the language of literary criticism, similar in origin to the contemporary or fairly recent attacks on Shelley and Milton — i.e., literary criticism reflecting or disguising conservative or even reactionary political views?

(Harry W. Rudman)

2. It is high time the brass in Shaw was separated from the gold. He was a creative dramatist who could make ideas crackle before the footlights. He was also a garrulous show-off. Let us stop pretending that his pontifical opinions invariably represent profound wisdom.

(Phillip Pollack)

3. The need for variorum editions because of changes by Shaw in the texts of plays and of their prefatory material (cf. the movie version of *Major Barbara* with the stage version, etc.).

(Harry W. Rudman)

4. Between the turn of the century and World War I, London was the vortex of a religious search that sometimes called itself "liberal Christianity." At the center of this was a Rev. R. W. Campbell, a Congregationalist minister, author of "The New Theology" and pastor of the City Temple. Never an organized movement, it had ties with other liberal groups — notably labor and the Fabians. It published a weekly periodical, "The Christian Commonwealth."

Bernard Shaw, who, of course, would never allow himself to be labeled "Christian," none the less spoke at City Temple a number of times and was well received there. His speeches were abstracted or carried verbatim in "The Christian Commonwealth."

In 1914-15 the pressures of World War I left little room for a liberal religion which insisted on essential equality and divinity for the enemy Hun. Rev. Campbell left the Congregationalists and became a canon in the Church of England. "The Christian Commonwealth" disappeared. Only Shaw continued to speak out, not as a pacifist, but as an unpopular critic of British and allied policy.

<sup>1</sup> Professors Lewis and Weintraub are on the English faculty at Penn State.

The effort to reestablish a liberal religious community between the wars, including the effort to revive a "New Commonwealth" failed. I know of no comparably socially conscious religious ferment in England or America since 1915. Yet it is now almost impossible to find a file of the old "Commonwealth" outside the British Museum; this, in spite of the fact that it is the sole source of some of G. B. S.'s most important religious speeches, and an exciting record of other unorthodox religious activity of the early century as well.

The social conditions which aroused the British independent religious thinkers of 1900 have largely changed or disappeared and some of their pronouncements may seem naive after two world wars and one depression, but this group did establish a direction for a liberal modern Christianity, which has lately been supplemented among more intellectual churchmen by what is loosely called "neo-orthodoxy" — more reactionary, less vigorous, less hopeful, less socially conscious, less openly searching.

Why? How did this shift come about? Has the intellectual choice been reduced to atheism or orthodoxy? Why is not Shaw's present influence stronger in this area? Certainly he gave much of his thought and energy to promoting his views on creative evolution and his own brand of mysticism. Why are these important aspects of his messages not seriously discussed by either of his recent major biographers? (It must be said here that Eric Bentley gives them a more proper place.) What, in fact, happened to "the new theology" of 60 years ago? Would it help provide a needed antidote for a contemporary theology which continues to estrange itself from many thinking people?

(Warren S. Smith)

**S. Weintraub:** (Opened meeting by calling attention to the first of the questions distributed to the conferees.)

**A. C. Edwards:** It's difficult to see how we can escape politics in any discussion of Shaw.

**George Wellwarth:** It's virtually impossible to separate pure literary criticism from criticism of Shaw's political views.

**Dan Laurence:** Political criticism of Shaw has not only been limited to reactionary or conservative groups only. Criticism of Shaw left the purely literary very early.

**Betty Bandel:** Perhaps the fact that Shaw was creating new literary forms helped prevent critics from offering purely literary criticism; they couldn't get out of the grooves because they were geared to an unconscious acceptance of then-current principles of what comedy should be.

**Robert Shedd:** Much of the political criticism results from our concern with the later plays where political interest was important. Therefore the conservatives attacked Shaw. We need to dig through this criticism to achieve proper understanding.

**Bandel:** I often wonder whether the later plays were a return to the pre-Heywood debate-polemical play.

**Frederick McDowell:** The later plays have more form than is generally admitted. Much of the virulent attack was in British newspapers; the U. S. more or less ignored this phase.

**Shedd:** The American attitude was unfortunate. The latter plays deserved better: *Too True to Be Good* can be just as stimulating as *Candida*.

Weintraub: (Introduces question two after some further discussion on the general unavailability in cheap reprints of almost all the "political" plays.)

Laurence: Behrman in his recent book on Beerbohm quotes Max as saying in effect that Shaw was brilliant but also wrote a lot of junk. The constant carping and complaining about Shaw's pontifical wisdom, and his contradictions, results from the misunderstanding that everything Shaw wrote was a registration of his personal opinion.

Weintraub: The difficulty arises from the failure to recognize that when Shaw puts a statement into the mouth of a character, he isn't necessarily speaking as Shaw.

Laurence: People don't believe his characters are other than Shaw.

McDowell: Shaw treats characters ironically; hence their opinions may be treated ironically too.

Laurence: Utterly ridiculous statements are often intended to get a response.

Barbara Watson: The misinterpretation often arises from such statements as "When women get the vote, the tax on bachelors will be crushing."

Weintraub: Shaw didn't intend every statement to be taken seriously merely because he said it.

Laurence: A major difficulty is that quotations from Shaw are often not dated when reprinted; hence the contradictory statements produce a surprise which comes from the failure to realize that Shaw changed his mind about many things in the course of a long life.

McDowell: Modern critics often use the term *paradoxical* in connection with Shaw, but seldom treat what he says in that light.

Bandel: The same thing happened to Shakespeare. Perhaps both playwrights, as popular artists, were thus subject to having collections made of their "wise sayings." Shaw is fair game for this kind of treatment because, he appears to speak to everybody, not just a coterie. The way to find out what Shaw the man really thought about large and small matters might be to compare what is controversial characters have to say with Shaw's encyclopedic works, *Everybody's Political What's What* and *The Intelligent Woman's Guide*.

Watson: That might not be as helpful as it first seems. Shaw has all the cranky opinions on personal matters. He's like Freud in this respect — a failing of great men, Ernest Jones says.

Weintraub: (introduces question 3)

S. Solomon: The movie edition of *Pygmalion* is an inferior text because it adds scenes, yet is not true to the actual scenario.

Laurence: But Shaw did add and copyright these scenes himself.

Shedd: Projects to define Shaw's text are complicated. Some are in public domain; some are in copyright — and there are often several authorized texts. Shaw scholars ought to be getting to work on this, but the problem is complicated because of the need to deal with the Public Trustee.

**Solomon:** There has been far too little textual criticism on Shaw so far. Maybe a variorum edition is not important yet. Most people don't care about variant texts.

**Weintraub:** Can we have adequate criticism — or understanding — without correct texts?

**Laurence:** We need the variant texts. How extensively did Shaw revise? He was the most extensive reviser in modern literature. Comparisons of texts will disclose verbal and other changes in great quantity: he never put anything into a book without a series of revisions. It is very important that there be a concentration on textual studies.

**Richard Ohmann:** Perhaps then scholars ought to get going on a variorum edition as soon as possible.

**Laurence:** To date Charles Shattuck's "Shaw's Bad Quarto" is the only textual study,<sup>2</sup> but Harry Geduld's forthcoming dissertation on *Back to Methuselah* will be a variorum.

**Wellwarth:** What would be the effect of variant texts on the acting version?

**Laurence:** Shaw would want the latest version to be acted.

**Harry Rudman:** Obviously the producer will use the text which is in the public domain.

**Weintraub:** Didn't Shaw make changes specifically in order to retain copyright?

**Laurence:** Yes, particularly to protect continental rights. One should not take Shaw seriously when he said that he didn't revise. He always did, including the altering of opinions. He revised his own letters over the years; when someone wanted to publish them, he would ask for them back and return them to the prospective publisher with revisions, often of major importance.

**Rudman:** That is, his letters are like Pope's letters.

**Shedd:** Is there any prospect for a variorum Shaw? I think more articles like Shattuck's would help.

**Weintraub:** It ought to be tried with the early plays first, since they're in the public domain.

**Stanley Rypins:** It would be best to differ a variorum edition as premature; there are too many other important problems that are more viable.

**Couchman:** Nevertheless, we need to watch the changes. Shaw himself suggested variorum problems in *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

**Edwards:** What problems would be peculiar to a Shaw variorum?

**Laurence:** Copyright and finances. There is no one with financial knowhow behind a Shaw variorum in the way there is behind, for example, the Whitman.

**Bandel:** There is the question of how much quotation from the text can be called fair use for purposes of criticism.

**Weintraub:** (Time officially ran out, although informal discussions continued, not herein recorded).

<sup>2</sup> "Bernard Shaw's 'Bad Quarto,'" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, LIV (October, 1955), pp. 651-63.

# A Continuing Check-list of Shaviana

compiled and edited by Charles A. Carpenter, Jr.<sup>1</sup>

## I. Works by Shaw

*Arms and the Man; a Pleasant Play*, with an introduction by Louis Kronenberger. New York: Bantam Books, 1960. A cheap paperback reprint with a fifteen-page introduction stressing the anti-romantic aspects of the play.

*How to Become a Music Critic*, ed. with an introduction by Dan H. Laurence. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961. Reviewed in this issue.

*John Bull's Other Island*, in Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, and William Burto, eds., *The Genius of the Irish Theatre* (New York: New American Library "Mentor Book," 1960).

Letter, in Dudley Sommer, *Haldane of Cloan; His Life and Times, 1856-1928* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960), 192-93. Part of a letter to Richard B. Haldane, gaily accusing him of hypocrisy in his Rectorial Address at Edinburgh University.

*The Man of Destiny* and *Candida*, in M. W. Steinberg, ed., *Aspects of Modern Drama* (New York: Holt, 1960), 350-444. Also includes excerpts from letters to Ellen Terry and from "Ideals and Idealists" in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*.

"On the Entirely Reasonable Murder of a Police Constable," in Ephraim London, ed., *The World of Law* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), II, 509-11. Shaw reinterprets a murder, popularly considered callous and brutal, as merely a business matter done to escape detection. Reprinted from the *Sunday Express*, May 13, 1928.

*The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (excerpts), in Richard Levin, ed., *Tragedy: Plays, Theory, and Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960), 195-201. A "Harbrace Sourcebook" placing Shaw in a context of other theorists on tragedy, ancient and modern.

*Shaw on Shakespeare*, ed. Edwin Wilson. New York, Dutton, 1961. A compilation of GBS's views on Shakespeare, ranging from reviews first reprinted in *Our Theatres in the Nineties* to excerpts from letters, prefaces and articles, and the texts of *Cymbeline Refinished* and *Shakes versus Shaw*. Paperback ("Everyman") and hard-cover editions.

*The Shorter Plays of Bernard Shaw*. New York: Apollo Editions, 1961. A paperback edition of nine of the ten plays published in hard-cover by Dodd, Mead (1960) as *Ten Short Plays*. The missing play (*The Admirable Bashville*) and the remaining shorter works are found in the Penguin *Seven One-Act Plays* (1958). Thus now available in complementary reprint editions are sixteen plays comprising Shaw's entire published dramatic output in this form.

*To a Young Actress: the Letters of Bernard Shaw to Molly Tompkins*. New York, Clarkson N. Potter, 1960. In gift-book format (9" x 12"), this volume uses its size to reproduce many of its hundred-plus letters from G. B. S. to Mrs. Lawrence Tompkins via photolithography, giving the reader the opportunity to examine, via typescript and holograph letter, G. B. S.'s epistolary and cursive technique. The letters themselves, to a young American woman actress of few real attainments other than the ability to draw letters from Shaw, have little significant biographical interest, repeating again the small talk Shaw wrote to other women, retailing some Henry Higgins-like advice and cataloguing his continental vacation trips.

"Words for Today: By G. B. S." ed. by David Boroff, *New York Times Magazine* (November 6, 1960), 27, 132. A collection of the "shafts and sallies" of Shaw which are still relevant today.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Carpenter, Shaw Review Bibliographer, is Librarian of the Goldwin Smith Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Readers, writers, and publishers are urged to call contemporary Shaviana to his attention.

*You Never Can Tell; a Pleasant Play*, with an introduction by S. N. Behrman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press "Bison Book," 1961. A quality paperback. The brief introduction is negligible.

## II. Shaviana — Books and Pamphlets

Hardwicke, Sir Cedric, *A Victorian in Orbit; the Irreverent Memoirs of Sir Cedric Hardwicke, as told to James Brough* (New York: Doubleday, 1961). Reviewed in the next issue.

Johnson, Denis, "Preface," *Collected Plays* (London: Cape, 1960), I, 1-2. Discusses two problematic statements made to him by Shaw at a Malvern festival.

Langner, Lawrence, *The Play's the Thing* (New York: Putnam, 1960), *passim*. Quotes from one Shaw letter and several conversations.

Longley, Marjorie, Louis Silverstein, and Samuel A. Tower, eds., *America's Taste, 1851-1959; the Cultural Events of a Century Reported by Contemporary Observers in the Pages of The New York Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960). Includes facsimiles of reports of the notorious reception given *Mrs. Warren's Profession* in 1905.

Murray, Gilbert, and others, *Gilbert Murray; an Unfinished Autobiography, with Contributions by His Friends*, ed. by Jean Smith and Arnold Toynbee (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960), 134-35, 154-57 and *passim*. Draws upon the unpublished Shaw papers in the British Museum, including a long letter to Murray on *Major Barbara* proving that Murray supplied some passages for his counterpart, Cusins, which Shaw incorporated in his revision of October, 1905.

Peacock, Ronald, *The Poet in the Theatre* (New York: Hill and Wang "Drama-books," 1960). A paperback reprint of a book which has a provocative essay on Shaw (chapter six). First published in 1946.

Speaight, Robert, *Christian Theatre*, "The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism," vol. 124 (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960), 122-24. Shaw was, "before anything else, a supreme public entertainer," who constructed "a religion of longevity on the arid soil of rationalism." "What establishes *Saint Joan* . . . among great plays of the Christian theatre is the victory of the saint over the dramatist." And so forth.

Tynan, Kenneth, *Curtains* (New York: Atheneum, 1961), *passim*. A collection of reviews and other writings on the theatre, mostly from *The Observer* and *The New Yorker*, including reviews of Shaw plays and Tynan's centenary pedestal-chopping, "The Demolition Expert," which characterizes Shaw as an "Irish aunt . . . gorgeously drunk with wit" and filled with righteous indignation. "There is fruit for the symbolist," he concludes, ". . . that prolific as he was, he left no children."

## III. Shaviana — Periodicals

Bradbrook, B. R., "Letters to England from Karel Capek," *Slavonic and East European Review*, XXXIX (December, 1960), 63-64, 68. Notes Shaw's reaction to Capek's death, etc.

Clurman, Harold, "Notes for a Production of *Heartbreak House*," *Tulane Drama Review*, V (March, 1961), 58-67. Clurman's working notes for his recent production, plus a suggestive "Concluding Statement" from a souvenir program. Clurman stresses the "'gayed up' seriousness" of the play: "part game, part prophecy."

Krutch, Joseph Wood, "G. B. S. and Initiations of Immortality," *Theatre Arts*, XLV (February, 1961), 65-67, 77. A summary estimate of Shaw by a popular critic. Krutch points to Shaw's wit, his mastery of prose, and his mixture of frivolity and seriousness as the outstanding qualities that give his plays

enduring vitality. What the plays lack, Krutch offers conventionally, is "the passions."

Robert, R., "G. Bernard Shaw, Music Critic," *Music Journal*, XVIII (November, 1960).

Rypins, Stanley, with rejoinders by Irving McKee, "Influential Women in Bernard Shaw's Life," *PMLA*, LXXVI (March, 1961), 156-57. Quibbles and counter-quibbles on the problem of which woman was the most "important" in Shaw's premarital life. Neither writer suggests his mother.

Scott, Charles, "Genus, Superman; Species, Multiform," *Educational Theatre Journal*, XII (December, 1960), 289-94. An attempt to document the elements that compose Shaw's "Superman concept." Ranging from *Caesar and Cleopatra* to *Why She Would Not*, Scott arrives at a catchall rather than precise definition, partly by disregarding Shaw's careful distinctions between the hero, the genius, the saint, the philosopher, and the "transitional" or (imaginary) evolving man. Obviously, Scott fails to locate a Shaw character who reveals all the elements of such a boundless ideal.

*The Shavian*, II (February, 1961). The journal of The Shaw Society (London). Includes "The Typographical Shaw . . ." by Joseph R. Dunlap (reprinted from the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, October, 1960); "Disciple and Master: Shaw and Mozart" by E. J. West (an account of Shaw's comments on the musician); "Irish Antitheses: Shaw and Joyce" by William White (not a comparison but a documented study of their relationship); etc.

#### VI. Shaviana — Dissertations

Since these items are not examined by the bibliographer, reference is given to the abstracts found in Dissertation Abstracts (DA).

Gillespie, Charles Richard, "A Study of Characterization in Selected Disquisitory Plays of Bernard Shaw," DA XXI (January, 1961), 2038-39 (State University of Iowa).

Pickett, Roy Glenwood, "H. L. Mencken's Rhetorical Battle," DA, XXI (December, 1960), 1570 (State University of Iowa). Discusses the influence of Ibsen, Shaw, and Nietzsche on Mencken's ideas.

Robinson, Marie J., "Revivals on the New York Stage, 1930-1950, with a Statistical Survey of Their Performances from 1750-1950." 2 vols., DA, XXI (November, 1960), 1291 (Northwestern University). Shakespeare led in revivals with 23; Shaw followed with 14. Ibsen and Barrie were their closest competitors, with nine and five.

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## Reviews:

### Movie "Millionairess"

The screen play<sup>1</sup> based on *The Millionairess* which was announced in the September, 1960, issue of the *Shaw Review* is now playing in first-run houses. Any Shavian who is so ill-advised or morbidly curious as to want to see it had better hurry, for it won't be around long.

Even Peter Sellers as the doctor — who has suffered a sea change into a Hindu — and Alastair Sim as Sagamore the lawyer cannot save it from being tasteless, pretentious, silly, and dull. As for the Epiphanie of Sophia Loren, one is reminded of the words of Fitzfassenden in the play itself: ". . . the principal woman was an angry-eyed creature with a queer foreign voice and a Hollywood accent." In the play it is Fitzfassenden who "strips well." In the movie it is Epiphanie who strips — well, practically — at every twist in a new plot. Between strips she emerges — twice — soaking wet from the Thames dressed in thin stuff which clings, and clings. At other times she, as the signs in the lobby say, "shoots up the fever in the doctor's clinic" and "makes like a incense burner in a boudoir" and "warms up a cold fish in a smoke house." Believe it or not, she does do these things, with the wooden grace and pectoral thrust of the figurehead on a Frisco clipper — and the eloquence.

What has all this to do with Shaw? Practically nothing. Fortunately for the Shavian, the credit line which says "Based on a play by George Bernard Shaw" slips by so fast that if you aren't watching closely you won't see it. It might better say "Based on a title by George Bernard Shaw." The Shaw lines which remain, as spoken by Sophia Loren in her own accent and Peter Sellers in his Urdu accent, are largely unintelligible and will trouble no one. The idea of the play was discarded along with dialogue and plot. What was the story of a woman born to be a boss has become the story of a woman born to be a tart — and failing in that.

In Cairo, so a news dispatch says, the moving picture was banned. There will be no need to ban it in this country: it lasted only eleven days in New York and will die quicker elsewhere. And good riddance.

— R. F. Bosworth<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Millionairess*, a screen play by Wolf Mankowitz based on the stage play by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Anthony Asquith, produced by Pierre Rouve for Twentieth Century Fox, and starring Sophia Loren, Peter Sellers, and Alastair Sim.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Bosworth, a member of *The Shaw Review* editorial Board, is Director of the School of Publication at Simmons College.

## Sean O'Casey's Experiments

Understanding and reverence of O'Casey are clearly revealed in Robert Hogan's *The Experiments of Sean O'Casey*.<sup>1</sup> It also contains a valuable collection of documents referring to the controversy over *The Silver Tassie*, a play that caused quite a furor when it was rejected by the Abbey Theatre in the middle twenties, and which subsequently led to O'Casey's final break with the Abbey. Among those represented in the controversy are Shaw, Yeats and Lady Gregory.

Professor Hogan does some excellent analyses of the O'Casey plays, including the neglected later ones, which many people consider to be vastly inferior to his earlier works, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*. Although O'Casey has written many plays of note since, he has never been what is called a "commercial success" in New York. His longest-running play, *Purple Dust*, ran off-Broadway for over 400 performances. None of his plays anywhere else ever ran that long. *Within the Gates*, although critically successful, ran a mere 140-odd performances on Broadway. Many of his latest works remain unproduced, and the two plays of his that the films produced were failures, both artistically and financially. Yet he is considered by many as the world's greatest living playwright. Even Shakespeare must have had his box-office problems in his day, and I daresay it took a *Comedy of Errors* or a *Titus Andronicus* to pull him out of it.

O'Casey has always been a man of the theatre, and no one can accuse any of his plays of a lack of theatricality. In an age of languished drama this man, now in his eighties, comes forward with new plays that fairly shout the joys of life and living. So the question arises: why are the plays not produced more, and why are they so rarely successful? The fault may lie within ourselves, and not in O'Casey.. Can it be that we are not ready for him? As with Schubert, Keats or Blake, it may well take the passing of another generation to give some talents the recognition they deserve, but unfortunately in the theatre an artist needs more than what is writ on paper. Words of a play must come alive on a stage and before an audience, for plays were written to be produced on stage, not just to be read on the printed page.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Hogan's book will be useful in this cause. His understanding reverence, however (and I say this not for myself, for I have just as much reverence for this Irishman), has a tendency to be a bit too biased on the pro-O'Casey side. After all, even in criticism one should show the other side of the coin. This Mr. Hogan does do, but not so much as he should have. But anyone who appreciates O'Casey will fairly enjoy this book, and should acquire a copy. Better still, then buy a ticket to his plays.

— Paul Shyre<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Hogan, *The Experiments of Sean O'Casey*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1960. \$5.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Shyre is best known for his adaption and direction of such O'Casey biographical works as *I Knock at the Door* and *Pictures in the Hallway*.

## G.B.S's Musical Criticism: *The Canon Expands*

This first of a projected eight volumes of uncollected Shawiana<sup>1</sup> gets the series off to a sprightly and chronologically sound start. Mr. Lawrence's preface makes clear the profound influence of music upon all of Shaw's writings, from his first novels through *Buoyant Billions*. A history of Shaw's ghostly and pseudonymous career in musical criticism is succinctly recounted, from his doing Lee's stints for *The Hornet* through his emergence as *Corno di Bassetto*, and beyond into occasional writings.

Lawrence writes that "No critic of Shaw's time — no performer for that matter — possessed so thorough a knowledge and understanding as Shaw did of the Italian repertory which dominated the London musical scene." This is a refreshing antidote to the platitude of Shaw as fanatical Wagnerite, as is Lawrence's citation of Shaw's pioneering for British music while castigating the inept, pedantic, derivative school of composers who claimed to represent English musical taste. Shaw's misjudgments are not overlooked either — he deprecated Brahms, "overestimated Gounod and undervalued Berlioz." For the most part, concludes Lawrence, Shaw instinctively recognized the true artist and rejected the false one. And though he wrote less frequently of music in the twentieth century than he had in the nineteenth, his acumen was never blunted. "Iconoclastic to the end, he refused to indulge in the practice of old men by reminiscing nostalgically about the past to prove that things were better then. Almost with his dying breath he insisted that we sing better today than our grandparents did." It is with this essay that the volume concludes — a short piece written at the end of his life and published in *Everybody's Magazine* nine days after his death.

In the title selection, a piece originally written for the *Scottish Musical Monthly* in 1894, Shaw confesses preserving "a set of the critical crimes" he perpetrated for *The Hornet* in 1876-77, when he, a youth of twenty, ghosted for Vandeleur Lee. A selection from this critical *juvenilia* is one of the great services of this volume. Other pre-Bassetto stirrings, some of them originally unsigned, are also added to the published canon after long interment in a dozen or more half-forgotten journals. There are Shavian gems among them: on almost every page of the post-*Hornet* material, sparkling passages cry out for quotation. Also resurrected are the *Bassetto* pieces in *The Star* which Shaw did not choose for *London Music*, including one which opens upon a discussion of the problems of "private" performances, about which he was already expert:

On Friday evening last I went to the Wind Instrument Society's concert at the Royal Academy of Music in Tenterden-street. Having only just heard of the affair from an acquaintance, I had no ticket. The concert, as usual, had been kept dark from me: Bassetto the Incorrputible knows too much to be welcome to any but the greatest artists. I therefore presented myself at the doors for admission on payment as a casual amateur. Apparently the wildest imaginings of the Wind Instru-

<sup>1</sup> How to Become a Music Critic, ed. Dan H. Laurence. New York, Hill and Wang, 1961. 340 pp., \$5.

ment Society had not reached such a contingency as a Londoner offering money at the doors to hear classical music played upon bassoons, clarionets, and horns; for I was told that it was impossible to entertain my application, as the building had no license. I suggested sending out for a license; but this, for some technical reason, could not be done. I offered to dispense with the license; but that, they said, would expose them to penal servitude. Perceiving by this that it was a mere question of breaking the law, I insisted on the secretary accompanying me to the residence of a distinguished Q.C. in the neighbourhood, and ascertaining from him how to do it. The Q.C. said that if I had handed the secretary five shillings at the door in consideration of being admitted to the concert, that would be illegal. But if I bought a ticket from him in the street, that would be legal. Of if I presented him with five shillings in remembrance of his last birthday, and he gave me a free admission in celebration of my silver wedding, that would be legal. Or if we broke the law without witnesses and were prepared to perjure ourselves if questioned afterwards (which seemed to me the most natural way), then nothing could happen to us.

I cannot without breach of faith explain which course we adopted: suffice it that I was present at the concert. . . . (3 March, 1890)

The nucleus of *The Perfect Wagnerite* appears here in "Wagner in Bayreuth;" the famous "Religion of the Pianoforte" essay reappears; but most of the pre-1913 selections — even the signed ones — have been previously unavailable, except in a very few great libraries. These are the bulk of the volume, and give it a value which can only be measured by its effect upon future reassessments of Shaw. What *How to Become a Musical Critic* proves, in its reprinted opinions on music from 1876 to 1950, is that Shaw's success in other fields did not deprive the musical world (after less than a decade) of one of its outstanding critics; instead we see Shaw's unflagging interest in music, manifested in diminished quantity but with inimitable zest and wit over three-quarters of a century.

— Stanley Weintraub

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## News and Queries

A SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH ALPHABET as envisioned by G. B. S. and commissioned in his will is scheduled to be used for the first time when a new edition of *Androcles and the Lion* is published in the fall, possibly with the text of the play in current English on facing pages. The alphabet is an adaption of the four winning proposals in a field of 467 contenders. The joint winners — a broker, a psychiatrist, a retired lettering designers and the wife of the Canadian naval attache in Moscow — have had their ideas merged with that of I. J. Pitman, an M. P. and expert on phonetics.

THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC has banned the British film, *The Millionairess*, because of alterations made to Shaw's play. In the play the doctor-hero is an Egyptian; in the film he is an Indian. The film's opening in Cairo was vetoed at the last moment when the censors decided that the doctor had been unfairly cheated of Egyptian nationality.

TWO BY SHAW," a double bill consisting of *Great Catherine* and an abridgement of *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, is scheduled for

a late fall or winter opening on Broadway. Joan Fontaine and Paul Lucas have been signed by Paul Gregory to co-star. Cedric Hardwicke may stage both plays. Gregory reports that "Two by Shaw" will not be a reading, but "a high-style rendition of the works," with seventeen supporting players. It will go into rehearsal in August, and tour for twenty weeks before its New York opening.

ANOTHER LITTLE-KNOWN SHAW PLAYLET will soon be published in England, it was announced by Fenner Brockway, M. P.

"It is a curious work, only about 1000 words long, and the last of three acts consists of a single sentence," Brockway said.

"I sent to Shaw, whom I first met in 1910, a political document for comment. His answer was in the form of a play, and the comment I asked for was caustic.

"What I had sent him (in 1936) was an Independent Labor Party statement on Palestine, in which we took the view that the British, in promising Palestine as a homeland for the Jews, really were hoping to get a mandate over the country and use it as an imperialist base.

"Shaw answered that the historical part of our statement was all nonsense. He says in his little play that Prime Minister Balfour gave Palestine to Chaim Weizmann, Zionist leader, in return for a chemical microbe, whatever that may be, to be used in the war against the Germans."

The little play will be part of a book which will contain about 50 letters and post cards which Shaw sent to Brockway.

Brockway said the play has no name. It has been in his possession in proof form down the years, the original manuscript having been destroyed in a World War II bombing raid.

A NINETY MINUTE TV ADAFTION OF CANDIDA was presented on CBS television on the afternoon of Sunday, April 16. Directed by John Newland, it featured Jean Engstrom, Jeff Morrow, Stephen Franken, Alan Dexter, Elizabeth Perry and Adam Stewart.

"ONE WOMAN CLASSIC THEATRE" — a touring production by Margaret Webster, recently featured alternate performances of "The World of Shakespeare" and "The World of G. B. Shaw." The G. B. S. program included readings from *Candida*, *Pygmalion*, *Major Barbara* and *Saint Joan*.

THE SHAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA April meeting featured Professor Stanley Rypins, who has been doing biographical research on Shaw, on "Shaw in the Light of His Diaries."

## Queries

For a study of Shaw's development as a dramatic artist up to 1911, I need references to obscure places where Shaw talks about his plays as plays. Can anyone assist me? I would be grateful.

Charles A. Carpenter, Jr.  
107 Hillview Place  
Ithaca, New York

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